

Chapter 5. Management Area Direction

Introduction

The 1987 “Prescott National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan” included specific direction on how to manage different land areas based on ecological characteristics. In this revised plan, we have addressed ecological variation using other methods (see chapters 1 and 2). Management area boundaries were selected based on human geographic boundaries, so that guidance in response to social or economic issues could be better identified to meet each community’s needs. As plan revision steps progressed, we asked ourselves which aspects of the plan needed to be addressed differently based on geographic location. The response was that recreation needs and desires were likely to be different for various parts of the Prescott NF. In addition, the Verde Valley area had specific desires relative to maintaining and enhancing open space.

The Prescott NF was divided into human geographic areas based on descriptions of communities located near and within the Prescott NF (Komar and Schultz, 2007). Using methods developed by James Kent and Associates, geographic areas were mapped indicating where people from various communities feel strongly about conditions and events. Communities were then invited to develop community visions for the Prescott NF and other surrounding lands.

In a more recent effort to develop a recreation strategy for the Prescott NF, similar boundaries were used to divide the forest and surrounding area into three zones. In this plan, those zone boundaries were adjusted slightly and are called geographic areas. Management areas are subdivisions of geographic areas. The relationship between geographic areas and management areas in this plan is shown in table 4 and figure 3.

Table 4. Geographic and management areas on the Prescott NF

| Agua Fria/Crown King Geographic Area | Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area | Verde Valley Geographic Area |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Agua Fria Management Area | Upper Verde Management Area | Verde Valley Management Area |
| Crown King Management Area | Williamson Valley North Management Area | |
| | Williamson Valley South Management Area | |
| | Prescott Basin Management Area | |



Community vision statements related to recreation or open space are included for each of the three geographic areas shown in figure 3. They were developed during community vision workshops held in 2007 and 2008 (see appendix C for the full community vision statements). Only statements related to recreation or open space were included. Forestwide desired conditions (chapter 2) address community vision statements related to other topics. While the source of each community vision statement is indicated in parentheses, the statements apply to the whole geographic area and may include desired community characteristics that overlap both the Prescott NF and other land ownership.

Desired conditions that apply to all of the Prescott NF have been included in chapter 2 of this plan. The desired conditions included for each management area are those that are specific to that land area. Forestwide desired conditions apply to these areas, as well all other areas on the Prescott NF. Management area desired conditions refine the forestwide descriptions. Objectives developed in response to management area desired conditions have been included in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Forestwide standards and guidelines are found in chapter 4 of this plan. The management area standards and guidelines described for each management area in this chapter provide more specific guidance for each individual management area. If there appears to be a conflict between forestwide standards and guidelines and those found in management areas, the most restrictive apply.

The management area plan decisions below are the numbered statements displayed in boxes. The information outside of these boxes are not plan decisions but are provided for background. In addition, standards are displayed in **bold** text (same as in chapter 4).

Agua Fria/Crown King Geographic Area

Historic Context

When the Spanish arrived in Arizona, the Agua Fria River Basin was occupied primarily by the Yavapai people, although Apache people were also present. With the discovery of precious metals in the Bradshaw Mountains and the Black Hills in the 1860s, “gold fever” hastened the migration of industrialism and capitalism to the area. Numerous mining camps and towns sprang up. In the 1920s, a quarter million sheep seasonally moved through the Agua Fria watershed from the Salt River Valley to the high plateau, with many stopping at the Old Cordes Ranch for shearing. Bales of wool eventually were moved by wagon from Old Cordes to the Cleator railroad siding and then to markets.

The largest mine in the Bradshaw Mountains, and the one that gave its name to the local settlement, was the Crowned King Mine. The first claim was in 1875. Years later the name was shortened to its current form, Crown King. Miners transformed the area with picks, machinery, explosives, smoke stacks, industrial chemicals, logging, and the construction of roads and railroads. The Crown King mill pounded away at ore from the mine through 1890, at one time making 3 tons of high grade concentrates per day. Surrounding forests were cut down to feed the boilers that drove the mill. In the 1930s, the city of Phoenix leased almost 2,000 acres of land in Horsethief Basin from the Forest Service. Through the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps programs, a dam was built to create a lake. Cabins, tennis courts, and playgrounds were constructed and used by families escaping the summer heat. After the land

reverted to the national forest, the cabins became summer home dwellings as part of the recreation residence program.

Characteristics of the Agua Fria/Crown King Geographic Area

Approximate acres: 373,000, of which 97 percent is National Forest System land

Miles of trail limited to nonmotorized uses: 101

Miles of motorized trails or multiuse trails: 126

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum setting:

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|----------------------------|---------------|
| Semiprimitive Nonmotorized | 102,425 acres |
| Semiprimitive Motorized | 171,990 acres |
| Roaded Natural | 74,846 acres |
| Roaded Modified | 12,468 acres |
| Rural | 80 acres |

Scenic Integrity:

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| Very High | 44,656 acres |
| High | 137,151 acres |
| Moderate | 173,491 acres |
| Low | 6,512 acres |

Special Areas:

- Castle Creek Wilderness
- Cedar Bench Wilderness (west portion)
- Pine Mountain Wilderness
- Grapevine Botanical Area

Recommended Wilderness Areas:

- Castle Creek Contiguous Recommended Wilderness Area

Inventoried Roadless Areas

- Arnold Mesa Inventoried Roadless Area
- Blind Indian Creek Inventoried Roadless Area
- Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area (west portion)
- Pine Mountain Wilderness Contiguous Inventoried Roadless Area

Management Areas:

- Agua Fria Management Area
- Crown King Management Area

Community Visions for the Agua Fria/Crown King Geographic Area

Recreational opportunities are common. Trails and signage are in good condition. Evidence of trash accumulation and illegal dumping is rarely seen. Use of trails by motorized vehicles takes place on designated roads, trails, or use areas (from Agua Fria community vision).

As new, sustainable, efficient, nonpolluting conservation practices are identified, they are incorporated into management activities (from Agua Fria community vision).

There is equal access to services, amenities, and recreational opportunities. Developed public facilities—such as campsites and trails—are adequate to accommodate visitors (from Crown King community vision).

Forest Service roads provide safe access to local citizens and visitors (from Crown King community vision).

Interactions and partnerships between local communities and municipal, State, and Federal agencies help to move toward achieving desired conditions (from Cherry community vision).

The rural nature and natural beauty is valued and retained (from Black Canyon City community vision).

Agua Fria Management Area

The Agua Fria Management Area generally includes lower elevation desert grasslands, piñon-juniper woodlands, and chaparral. This area includes the communities of Cordes Junction, Dugas, and Cherry. Access is provided by State Highways 69 and 169, Interstate 17, and single lane roads. Permitted livestock grazing is common and agriculture remains a way of life.

Pine Mountain Wilderness is located within this management area and crosses over onto the Tonto National Forest. Although it is co-located on two forests, the Prescott and Tonto, the management direction is guided by the Prescott NF's land management plan. Information in this land management plan is a substitute for individual wilderness management plans for each designated wilderness on the Prescott NF.

Most recreation opportunities are dispersed. Horseback riding, OHV use, hunting, and hiking are common. While OHV policy restricts such use to designated roads, trails, and areas, the open areas prove to be attractive to riders who want to leave trails and roads even though it is unlawful.

Desired Conditions for the Agua Fria Management Area

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| DC-AF MA-1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motorized use is found on designated trails and roads. Developments and interactions between visitors are few. Motorized and nonmotorized opportunities are often separated, but may share trailhead access. Visitors and citizens make use of trails that provide the opportunity for their desired experiences and “unofficial” trails are not evident. The nonmotorized Black Canyon Trail stretches from BLM land ownership through the Prescott NF connecting Black Canyon City to Camp Verde. Hunting is common. OHV use and motorized access to dispersed camping remains within the legal distance from roads, especially near Yellow Jacket Creek north of the Agua Fria National Monument. Small, dispersed campsites are scattered along designated roads and outside of riparian corridors. Their use only minimally affects resources, and the riparian corridors remain in functional condition. Interactions between grazing permittees and recreationists are generally positive or benign. Signing and other tools are used to communicate the need to respect gate closures for livestock and natural resources. |
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Objectives for the Agua Fria Management Area

All objectives, including those related to management area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Guidelines for the Agua Fria Management Area

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| Guide- AF MA-1 | Management actions should reduce recreation impacts, such as soil compaction or loss of vegetation, in the riparian corridor along Yellow Jacket Creek. |
| Guide- AF MA-2 | Management actions should retain the scenic integrity objectives associated with the Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area. |

Crown King Management Area

The Bradshaw Mountains are the major feature of the Crown King Management Area. Elevation ranges from 3,000 to over 7,500 feet. Vegetation on the eastern side of the management area includes desert communities. A major attraction for visitors is the cooler temperatures and ponderosa pine found at higher elevations. This area includes the communities of Cleater, Old Cordes, and Crown King. Access via Senator Highway, Forest Road 177, or County Road 59 can be primitive, with single lane roads threading their way through switchbacks to Crown King and the Horsethief Basin Recreation Area. The major recreation points include trails such as the off-highway vehicle (OHV) connection to Lake Pleasant Recreation Area, the native surface roadways traveled by both vehicles and OHVs, and the hiking and horseback riding in Castle Creek Wilderness. Developed camping opportunities are found in Horsethief Basin, and dispersed camping takes place where there is enough accessible level area to camp. The 800-acre Grapevine Botanical Area contains 12 perennial springs which support a variety of plants and wildlife, including a distinctive alder-walnut vegetative community, and it provides a popular day-use destination for hikers.

Desired Conditions for the Crown King Management Area

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| DC-CK MA-1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation information is available to visitors to Crown King; OHV visitors remain on legal, designated trails and routes that are well signed and well maintained. Areas are generally trash free. • There are several dispersed campsites near the community of Crown King that show minimal compaction and have vegetative cover at a density similar to that found in the surrounding area. Developed facilities in Horsethief Basin are well maintained and respond to the demand for use. Hazlett Hollow Campground allows OHV access to developed campsites. • Recreation use provides a sustainable contribution to the local economy during summers at Crown King. • Recreational target shooting is not common in the Crown King area. • Palace Station historic stage stop retains its historic value, and facilities there are well maintained. |
| DC-CK MA-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West of Forest Road 52 (Senator Highway) and Forest Road 362, the recreation setting is largely nonmotorized with occasional OHV trails crossing from east to west. The setting is one of moderate isolation from sights and sounds of people, and the environment is predominantly unmodified. • To the east of Forest Road 52, the setting is largely motorized, with the exception of Castle Creek Wilderness. There is a high degree of interaction with the natural environment throughout the area. Visitor use is high nearer Crown King and Horsethief Basin, especially on weekends, and interaction between visitors is common in the summer time. • Castle Creek Wilderness provides the opportunity to experience nonmotorized and nonmechanized activity within a predominantly unmodified environment. The concentration of visitors is low, and the terrain and limited water availability make activities challenging. • Forest Road 711, provides access from the south to Crown King, and it remains a 4-wheel drive, very high clearance vehicle route that provides extreme challenge. |
| DC-CK MA-3 | <p>The area in and around the Grapevine Botanical Area provides a nonmotorized setting for recreation. Within the Grapevine Botanical Area, Grapevine Creek and riparian areas are healthy, the watershed is properly functioning, and sensitive plant and animal species are protected. The unique botanical characteristics that make the area valuable for scientific research are protected and maintained (see map 5 in appendix A for location).</p> |

Objectives for the Crown King Management Area

All objectives, including those related to management area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Standards for the Crown King Management Area

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| Std-CK MA-1 | <p>Within the Grapevine Botanical Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No livestock grazing, trailing, or driving shall take place within the botanical area except that livestock may trail through the Bootlegger-Grapevine Unit on established roads to Forest Road 87A and then Trail 304. This movement shall be controlled and not be accomplished by drifting. • Motorized or mountain bike use shall not take place on Trails 4, 304, and 9432 below the rim of Big Bug Mesa. • Recreation use shall be limited to day use. |
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Guidelines for the Crown King Management Area

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| Guide-CK MA-1 | Management actions should reduce recreation impacts such as soil compaction or loss of vegetation and provide a sanitary, primitive camping opportunity in the vicinity of Horsethief Basin and the Crown King community. |
| Guide-CK MA-2 | Management actions should maintain the wilderness characteristics of the Castle Creek Contiguous recommended wilderness area until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward it to Congress for designation. |

Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area

Historic Context

From 1853 to 1854, Lieutenant Amiel W. Whipple led a military expedition into northern Arizona and established the first access routes to nearby gold fields. After the Walker party found gold near Granite Creek and near the Hassayampa River, Arizona was organized as a separate territory and its first temporary capital was located at nearby Fort Whipple. The city of Prescott was designated the capital of the new territory of Arizona from 1865 to 1867 and again from 1877 to 1889. The early economy of the area centered on cattle ranching and mining. Prescott's first rodeo was held in 1888, and that annual event has continued to the present. The city places great emphasis on historic preservation, with over 600 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

Chino Valley, about 16 miles north of Prescott, is thought to have been named by Lieutenant Whipple after the curly grama grasses that were common and called "del china" by Mexicans. What is now Prescott Valley was originally called Lonesome Valley and was part of the Fain family ranch for years. In the 1960s, speculators from Phoenix bought land about 7 miles east of Prescott and incorporated under the name Prescott Valley. They sold lots to those in northern areas who were looking for warmer, sunny winters. The towns of Prescott Valley, Chino Valley, and Prescott together make up an area known locally as the "Tri-City" area with a combined population estimated at 88,000 in the 2006 census. Yavapai-Prescott tribal lands are located next to and partially within the borders of Prescott.

Characteristics of the Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area

Approximate acreage is 896,000, of which 87 percent is National Forest System land.

Miles of trail limited to nonmotorized uses: 235

Miles of motorized or multiuse trails: 224

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum setting:

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|----------------------------|---------------|
| Semiprimitive Nonmotorized | 160,594 acres |
| Semiprimitive Motorized | 349,882 acres |
| Roaded Natural | 206,115 acres |
| Roaded Modified | 58,812 acres |
| Rural | 1,878 acres |
| Urban | 14 acres |

Scenic Integrity:

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| Very High | 54,074 acres |
| High | 247,258 acres |
| Moderate | 446,917 acres |
| Low | 26,104 acres |
| Very Low | 2,942 acres |

Special Areas:

- Juniper Mesa Wilderness
- Apache Creek Wilderness
- Sycamore Canyon Wilderness
- Woodchute Wilderness (west portion)
- Granite Mountain Wilderness
- Upper Verde River, eligible for wild and scenic river designation

Recommended Wilderness Areas:

- Apache Creek A Recommended Wilderness Area
- Apache Creek B Recommended Wilderness Area
- Bald Mountain Recommended Wilderness Area
- Juniper Mesa Recommended Wilderness Area
- Sycamore Canyon A Recommended Wilderness Area
- Sycamore Canyon B Recommended Wilderness Area

Inventoried Roadless Areas:

- Ash Creek Inventoried Roadless Area
- Connell Mountains Inventoried Roadless Area
- Fritsche Inventoried Roadless Area
- Muldoon Inventoried Roadless Area
- Sheridan Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area

Management Areas:

- Upper Verde Management Area
- Williamson North Management Area
- Williamson South Management Area
- Prescott Basin Management Area

Community Visions for the Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area

Recreation access for all ages and physical conditions is available. Roads, trails, and signage, as well as water source access for horses is available and well maintained (from Wilhoit community vision).

There is a thoughtful balance between available access and protection of forest resources and aesthetics. A comprehensive system of meaningful and sustainable trails, trailheads, and designated campsites is present. Conflicts between types of uses are rare, especially those that take place on nonmotorized and multiuse trails. All user groups, including hikers, equestrians, bicyclists, motorized vehicle operators, and hunters enjoy a reasonable amount of access (from Prescott community vision).

Many portions of the geographic area retain open areas and a feeling of “space.” Areas for activities like horseback riding, hiking, and taking the dogs for walks is found throughout the geographic area and provide the feeling of openness that people enjoy (from Paulden community vision).

Upper Verde Management Area

The focus of this management area is the headwaters and upper portion of the Verde River. The Verde is a perennial river with continuous flow, and the upper portion is eligible for designation as a wild and scenic river. There has been great public interest in such designation, as it would complement the existing wild and scenic designated section south of Camp Verde.

The management area also includes Sycamore Canyon Wilderness which is located within and is managed by three national forests—the Coconino, Kaibab, and Prescott. Management direction for this wilderness is found within the Coconino NF’s land management plan.

On the southern end, the management area extends to just outside the community of Cherry, on the western slopes of the Black Hills. Access to the area is via State Highways 89 and 89A and the Perkinsville Road.

Desired Conditions for the Upper Verde Management Area

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| DC-UV MA-1 | The upper Verde River retains its outstandingly remarkable values, while recreation facilities are found in several locations along the river. These facilities provide for day use or overnight camping, make use of existing roads as access, and minimize resource impacts, including heritage resources. |
| DC-UV MA-2 | <p>Recreation sites are found in areas where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The landscape is generally natural with modifications moderately evident.• Opportunities for challenge and risk are generally moderate to low.• Opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized activities are present. |

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| DC-UV MA-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized use is consistent with existing regulations. Control systems, such as law enforcement activity or citizen interactions, ensure resource impacts are minimized as population and visitor use increase. • The opportunity for a nonmotorized experience is found in the area south of the river between Forest Roads 638 and 9110H and continues along the river corridor to Bear Siding. East of Perkinsville Road, opportunities for nonmotorized experiences continue along the river and connect with Sycamore Canyon Wilderness. • The opportunity for a variety of experiences exists, with motorized uses limited to designated roads and trails and a less developed setting found between those routes. |
| DC-UV MA-4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are opportunities to experience isolation from manmade sights, sounds, and management controls in Sycamore Canyon Wilderness and Woodchute Wilderness. • North of the upper Verde River, existing NFS roads provide access for hunting and driving for pleasure. • Permitted firewood cutting and dispersed camping are common. |

Objectives for the Upper Verde Management Area

All objectives, including those related to management area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Guidelines for the Upper Verde Management Area

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| Guide- UV MA- 1 | Recreation facilities developed in the vicinity of the upper Verde River should be placed near existing roadways to retain opportunities for isolation along the river where designated roads and motorized trails are rare. |
| Guide- UV MA- 2 | Management tools (e.g., increased signage, visitor contacts, or education efforts) should be used to highlight appropriate trail use near the upper Verde River. |
| Guide- UV MA- 3 | Interpretive programs and enforcement activity should encourage appropriate behaviors and provide recreationists with information about the Verde River ecosystem. |
| Guide- UV MA- 4 | Management actions should maintain the wilderness characteristics of the Sycamore Canyon A and Sycamore Canyon B recommended wilderness areas until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward them to Congress for designation. |

Williamson Valley North Management Area

This management area includes checkerboard ownership in the northern half of the area, Walnut Creek that flows east and west through the area, and two wilderness areas near the western side of

the area. It can be accessed by Williamson Valley Road (County Road 5) and Forest Road 664. Most recreation activity is related to trail use or other dispersed activity. There are no developed campgrounds in this area.

Desired Conditions for the Williamson Valley North Management Area

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| DC-WVN MA-1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trail system is formally designated, well maintained, and signed. The area includes a mixture of both motorized and nonmotorized recreation opportunities; however, nonmotorized opportunities are more common. Trails with various intended uses are located to minimize conflict. Hiking trails are designed to take advantage of spring locations. Trails and trailheads located along the interface between Forest Service and other ownership efficiently and effectively provide access to the Prescott NF, while avoiding resource damage. |
| DC-WVN MA-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for primitive experiences with few interactions between visitors and isolation from manmade sights and sounds are found within Apache Creek Wilderness and Juniper Mesa Wilderness and the immediate area surrounding each. Conflicts between recreation uses are infrequent. Opportunities are available to view wildlife, and negative effects to wildlife and water resources from recreation use are identified and mitigated. |

Objectives for the Williamson Valley North Management Area

All objectives, including those related to management area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Guidelines for the Williamson Valley North Management Area

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| Guide-WVN MA-1 | As trail facilities are developed at the interface between national forest and other ownership in the Williamson Valley North Management Area, consideration should be given to providing public access on a designated system of roads and trails. |
| Guide-WVN MA-2 | Management tools (e.g., timing restrictions, increased signage, visitor contacts, or education efforts) should be used to minimize recreation impacts to wildlife species. |
| Guide-WVN MA-3 | Management actions should maintain the wilderness characteristics of Apache Creek A, Apache Creek B, Bald Mountain, and Juniper Mesa recommended wilderness areas until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward them to Congress for designation. |

Williamson Valley South Management Area

This area extends from the vicinity of Camp Wood Road south toward the city of Prescott and surrounds the Prescott Basin Management Area. It includes: Granite Mountain Wilderness, Alto Pit Off-Road Motorized Use Area, and 317 miles of trails where motorized use is allowed. It is accessed primarily via Camp Wood Road (County Road 68) in the northern part of the area and County Roads 66 and 121 on the east and south.

Desired Conditions for the Williamson Valley South Management Area

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| DC-WVS MA-1 | <p>The predominant settings in this management area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixture of opportunities to affiliate with other groups or to be isolated from people. • A generally natural landscape where the few facilities blend in with the surroundings. • A concentration of visitors that varies from low in the Sheridan Mountains to high in the area that surrounds Prescott Basin. |
| DC-WVS MA-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized activities are present, with motorized activities being more common. • Conflicts between recreation uses are minimized. • Facilities that support trail systems, such as trailheads or camping, are found in the vicinity of Camp Wood Road (County Road 68). Visitors and citizens use designated trails or areas that provide opportunities for their desired experiences and “unofficial” trails are not evident. • Motorized access for dispersed camping or firewood gathering occurs near designated roads. |
| DC-WVS MA-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to ecology and water resources are uncommon. The Hassayampa River and the area along Copper Basin Wash support healthy, properly functioning riparian areas, are trash free, and show few natural resource impacts due to recreation use. • Granite Mountain Wilderness provides quiet recreation in a location that is easy to access. |

Objectives for the Williamson Valley South Management Area

All objectives, including those related to management area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Standards for the Williamson Valley South Management Area

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| Std- WVS MA-1 | Within Granite Mountain Wilderness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New fixed anchor climbing routes shall not be created; however, existing fixed anchors may be maintained for rock climbing.• Power drills and other electro-mechanical or pneumatic devices shall not be used for maintaining fixed anchors. |
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Guidelines for the Williamson Valley South Management Area

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| Guide- WVS MA-1 | Within Granite Mountain Wilderness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All dogs should be on a leash.• Camping should not take place within 200 feet of either side of Trail 261.• Campfires should not be used. |
| Guide- WVS MA-2 | Recreation facilities developed in the vicinity of the Camp Wood Road (County Road 68) should be placed near existing roadways to retain opportunities for isolation from people in areas where designated roads and motorized trails are rare. |

Prescott Basin Management Area

Recreation within the Prescott Basin is concentrated around the city of Prescott. Residents can often drive for less than 15 minutes and enjoy the natural environment. The Prescott Basin area was first identified in 1999 and incorporated by amendment into the 1987 plan in order to respond to needs to provide more controls on recreation use related to dispersed camping. These controls have been integrated with the direction found in this plan.

Desired Conditions for the Prescott Basin Management Area

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| DC-PB MA-1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction between recreation users is common. • Conflicts between recreation uses are infrequent. • There are multiple recreation opportunities, including developed campgrounds, designated dispersed camping, day use sites, an OHV off-road area, and multiple trails for both motorized and nonmotorized use. • Existing facilities are well maintained. • Parking is available for high-use periods including holiday weekends. • Recreational target shooting does not occur due to density of visitors and recreation facilities. • Recreation use is moderate at sites that are not located near water. Occurrences of vandalism and graffiti are minimal, and if they occur, are obvious for only a short time. • Impacts to ecology and water resources, such as soil compaction or loss of vegetation, are uncommon. • Educational activities, such as campfire programs or naturalist tours, are provided within campgrounds or in other areas where people congregate. |
| DC-PB MA-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and designated dispersed recreation sites support both community based and Prescott NF based recreation opportunities. • Designated dispersed sites provide an inviting, sanitary, more primitive place to camp. Expansion of individual sites and evidence of overuse is minimal. Resource impacts due to recreation use, such as soil compaction or lack of vegetation, are minimized. |
| DC-PB MA-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a balance between motorized and nonmotorized recreation opportunities. Nonmotorized opportunities are expanded near existing urban populations by connecting existing small, nonmotorized parcels (see map 3 in appendix A). • Both motorized and nonmotorized trail systems consist of interconnecting loops, as well as trails that connect communities or to other destinations. Visitors and citizens use designated trails or areas that provide opportunities for their desired experiences, and “unofficial” trails are not evident. |

Objectives for the Prescott Basin Management Area

All objectives, including those related to management area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Guidelines for the Prescott Basin Management Area

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| Guide-PB MA-1 | Dispersed camping within the Prescott Basin Management Area should not exceed a total of 7 days within a 30 consecutive day period. |
| Guide-PB MA-2 | Intensive recreation control systems, such as permits, temporary closures, or reservation systems, should be used for resource protection or to prevent recreation use conflicts. |
| Guide-PB MA-3 | Interpretive programs should focus on minimizing user conflicts, encouraging appropriate behaviors, and providing recreation users with information about natural ecosystems and the wildland-urban interface. |
| Guide-PB- MA-4 | Recreational target shooting should be restricted in areas where it has the potential to create safety problems. |

Verde Valley Geographic Area

Historic Context

Inhabited 5,000 years or more ago by hunter-gatherers, the Verde Valley has long been populated. Around 800 AD, an agricultural-based culture settled and made use of irrigation to grow crops. Starting in 1,500 AD, the area was used by nomadic Yavapai and the Apache people, who still call the area home. As settlers from Europe and the eastern part of the U.S. migrated to the West, conflicts erupted between them and the native people. Fort Verde, originally called Fort Lincoln, was established in January 1864 by a group of volunteers from New Mexico. Later the fort was used by U.S. Army regulars to mount offensive operations against the Yavapai and Apaches. In 1875, acting on presidential executive order, about 1,500 Yavapai and Dilzhe'e Apache from the Rio Verde Indian Reserve were transferred to the Indian agency at San Carlos, 180 miles away. This led to the loss of many lives and the loss of treaty lands promised to the Yavapai-Apache. When the Yavapai and Apache were released, only about 200 made their way back to the Verde Valley. Currently, the Yavapai-Apache have purchased lands and are a cultural and economic contributor to the area.

Many communities in the area, including Cottonwood, Camp Verde, Beaver Creek, and Cornville, were formed to support agricultural activity. These communities are located near the Verde River or its tributaries, where fertile land, views, and green vegetation are still found. Mining has also been an important factor within the Verde Valley. The town of Jerome originated as a copper mining camp and was incorporated in 1876. Railroads were built to support the mine, including one to the smelter in Clarkdale. In 1882, the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad was completed connecting Jerome with Ash Fork to the north. A portion of this line is now called the Verde Canyon Railroad and is operated as a tourist attraction in Clarkdale. Jerome's population peaked in the 1920s at about 15,000, but dwindled as the demand for copper decreased after World War II. Its population is now about 450, and it is a thriving tourist and artist community, as well as a designated National Historic District (Yavapai County, 2006; Komar and Schultz, 2007; and Forest Service, 2005c).

Characteristics of the Verde Valley Geographic Area

Approximate acreage: 141,000 of which 82 percent is land under management by the Prescott NF

Miles of trails limited to nonmotorized uses: 58

Miles of motorized or multiuse trails: 58

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum setting:

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|----------------------------|--------------|
| Semiprimitive Nonmotorized | 25,014 acres |
| Semiprimitive Motorized | 48,672 acres |
| Roaded Natural | 23,518 acres |
| Roaded Modified | 16,555 acres |
| Rural | 1,674 acres |
| Urban | 19 acres |

Scenic Integrity:

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Very High | 9,896 acres |
| High | 57,654 acres |
| Moderate | 47,128 acres |
| Low | 757 acres |
| Very Low | 17 acres |

Special Areas:

- Cedar Bench Wilderness (east portion)
- Woodchute Wilderness (east portion)
- Verde River Wild and Scenic segments

Recommended Wilderness Areas:

- Black Canyon Recommended Wilderness Area

Inventoried Roadless Areas:

- Black Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area
- Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area (east portion)
- Hackberry Inventoried Roadless Area

Management Areas:

- Verde Valley Management Area

Community Visions for the Verde Valley Geographic Area

Wide open spaces are free of litter and illegal uses. Prescott NF lands provide panoramic views (from Verde Valley community vision).

Each community retains its own identity and character. Unincorporated residential neighborhoods, farms, and ranches are intermingled and all are buffered by Prescott NF lands that provide natural open spaces and big mountain views (from Verde Valley community vision).

A system of nonmotorized multiuse trails connects communities, allows access to public lands and encourages people to improve health and vitality by exploring the outdoors. Roads, designated trails, and selected areas are managed for responsible use of off-highway vehicles; while other areas are set aside for protection or managed for nonmotorized uses (from Verde Valley community vision).

Recreationists—including anglers, birders, hunters, hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, gun enthusiasts, river runners, hang gliders, and off-highway vehicle drivers—respect and use the national forest in harmony with each other and the environment (from Verde Valley community vision).

Federal, State, and county agencies work cooperatively and effectively with neighboring municipalities, groups, and individuals to protect public lands and enforce the rules that govern them (from Verde Valley community vision).

Recreational shooting takes place in designated areas and educational programs encourage safe and wise use of firearms (from Jerome community vision).

Verde Valley Management Area

The Verde Valley Management Area includes the Prescott NF land area on the east side of the Black Hills and west of the Verde River. The communities of Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, and Jerome are located here.

Desired Conditions for the Verde Valley Management Area

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| DC-VV MA-1 | The Black Hills continue to provide a scenic backdrop for the Verde Valley. Lands within the boundaries of the Prescott NF that enhance open space, scenic, watershed, or other natural resource values remain in national forest ownership or are obtained through land adjustment. The land exchange process is open to the public, and there are opportunities to provide feedback regarding the land exchange. |
| DC-VV MA-2 | The viewshed associated with the State Highway 89A Scenic Byway retains its scenic qualities and natural character. Visitors encounter a landscape that appears natural within the context of native vegetation and landforms and generally unaltered by human activity. |
| DC-VV MA-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recreation opportunities are abundant and varied. Multiple opportunities exist for motorized and nonmotorized trail use, picnicking, developed camping, hunting, and river based activities along the Verde River. Visitors have opportunities to visit historic sites, view scenic vistas, birdwatch, and appreciate undeveloped, naturally occurring open space between the vibrant communities of Jerome, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, and Camp Verde.• Between September and April of each year, opportunities for long-term (i.e., greater than 14 days) camping exist.• Local user groups are well informed about recreation opportunities and restrictions, providing helpful information to users and self-patrol of recreation activities.• Evidence of overuse, such as soil compaction or lack of vegetation, is minimal at all recreation sites. Occurrences of vandalism and graffiti are minimized, and if they occur, are obvious for only a short time.• Local residents and visitors feel safe from the hazards of recreational |

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| | target shooting activity that occurs within Prescott NF boundaries. |
| DC-VV MA-4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation use within the Verde Valley Management Area is concentrated primarily at areas along the Verde River corridor and on top of Mingus Mountain. • There are multiple recreation sites along the Verde River, including developed campgrounds, designated dispersed camping, and day-use areas. Parcels of National Forest System land along the river provide a nonmotorized setting for visitors, and river access points meet public use needs. Educational efforts enhance visitor experiences by informing people about the history and ecology of the river and the area. Visitors find that recreation opportunities complement those provided by city, State, tribal, other agency, and private entities. • Mingus Mountain contains multiple recreation sites, including developed campgrounds, designated dispersed camping, and day-use areas. Designated dispersed sites at Mingus Mountain provide an inviting, sanitary, and primitive place to camp as an alternative to developed campgrounds. Trails are well maintained and trailheads have space to safely handle parking demand. Information on recreation opportunities is available at obvious and convenient locations. Developed camping opportunities are fulfilling demand. |
| DC-VV MA-5 | Cedar Bench Wilderness and Woodchute Wilderness provide opportunities for remote experiences and quiet, secluded hunting. |
| DC-VV MA-6 | Both motorized and nonmotorized trail systems consist of interconnecting loops, as well as trails that connect communities or other non-Prescott NF destinations. Motorized and nonmotorized opportunities are generally separated. Visitors and citizens make use of trails that provide opportunities for their desired experiences, and “unofficial” trails are not evident. Trailheads efficiently provide parking and access to trails where they are most critically needed. OHV trailheads provide a relatively dust-free environment that prevents erosion. |

Objectives for the Verde Valley Management Area

All objectives, including those related to management area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, “Objectives.”

Guidelines for the Verde Valley Management Area

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| Guide- VV MA-1 | Management actions should discourage unsafe and inappropriate winter recreation on Mingus Mountain. |
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| Guide-VV MA-2 | Recreation control systems including, but not limited to, reservation systems, physical and spatial control structures, and designated dispersed sites should be used to reduce recreation impacts such as soil compaction or loss of vegetation along the crest of Mingus Mountain. |
| Guide-VV MA-3 | Land acquisition and exchange opportunities should emphasize retaining or adding to Prescott NF lands in the Verde Valley between Cottonwood and Camp Verde. |
| Guide-VV MA-4 | Management actions should maintain the wilderness characteristics of the Black Canyon recommended wilderness area until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward it to Congress for designation. |
| Guide-VV MA-5 | Management actions should retain the scenic integrity objectives associated with the Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area. |
| Guide-VV- MA-6 | Recreational target shooting should be restricted in areas where it has the potential to create safety problems. |